



Nuclear Waste Program
3100 Port of Benton Blvd.
Richland, WA 99354
509-372-7950 phone

**[www.ecy.wa.gov/
programs/nwp](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp)**

Hanford Cleanup Line
800-321-2008



Focus on Our Top Priorities at Hanford

from Ecology's Nuclear Waste Program

Public meetings provide a unique opportunity for you to learn about and discuss Hanford issues; speak directly with the public servants responsible for cleanup, and; for agency leaders to hear directly from you, the public. Below is a summary of key issues many of you have asked us to address.

Your views and concerns are important to us. Please contact us if you would like more information or if there are other issues of concern you would like to discuss.

Jane Hedges, *Nuclear Waste Program Manager*

Waste Treatment Plant

Contact: Suzanne Dahl

Schedules are slipping and costs are climbing, but the need for the vitrification plant is greater than ever. We are working hard to find an acceptable solution. We are in discussions with U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) to determine if we can establish a new enforceable plan without going to court. Our highest priority is to have a credible path forward that is widely supported and to resume construction on the Waste Treatment Plant (WTP).

Bulk Vitrification / Supplemental Treatment

Contact: Suzanne Dahl

We have not made a decision on whether bulk vitrification can be the supplemental treatment Hanford needs. We cannot make that choice until testing shows how well the glass works to immobilize the waste. While USDOE's recent expert review revealed no fatal flaws, the review did identify 19 technical issues that must be resolved before we can move forward with hot testing. Without funding, the schedule for resolving these issues and performing those tests is being delayed at least 5 years until 2011. Five more years is a long time to wait for a decision that was supposed to be made this past June. This delay means bulk vitrification will not provide LAW treatment significantly sooner than the WTP. From the state's perspective, early treatment was one of the significant advantages for this technology.

Worker Health and Safety

Contact: Ron Skinnarland

We are committed to ensuring Hanford's cleanup is safe for workers. We have heard workers concerns about tank vapors, beryllium, and USDOE's contractor for processing workers' claims. After the concerns about the claims contractor voiced at last year's State of the Site meeting, our director and the governor took action. The state's Labor and Industries department hired consultants to review the processing of worker claims. A copy of the report can be found at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/>.



Groundwater

Contact: Dib Goswami

Groundwater remains a key priority. We work with USDOE and stakeholders to find and use new and innovative technologies. We also continue to monitor for contamination in Hanford's groundwater. This year, we moved forward to test a technology new to the Site. We call it apatite sequestration. It will use apatite, a mineral that binds chemically with strontium, to form an underground barrier that captures strontium and blocks it from getting to the river. We are eagerly awaiting results to see whether the apatite injection is working.

Tri-Party Agreement Milestones

Contact: Laura Cusack

We are concerned about Tri-Party Agreement milestones relating to Tank Waste Retrieval and Treatment. We are discussing with USDOE any legitimate basis for negotiating new commitments; or if we must resort to legal action to enforce TPA milestones. We're also concerned about USDOE missing milestones that ensure transuranic wastes meet acceptance standards for offsite disposal.

The Tri-Party Agreement is the legally binding document agreed to by USDOE, USEPA, and the State of Washington. It is critically important to ensuring the safe and adequate cleanup of the Hanford Site.

Hanford Funding

Contact: Nolan Curtis

Here's what Governor Gregoire recently said about Hanford's budget:

"...The greatest danger at Hanford is funding cuts and more delays. Many of the underground storage tanks for the highly radioactive waste are obsolete and leak-prone. The waste must be removed and that cannot happen until the treatment plant is completed.

The issue at Hanford is neither remote nor speculative. Leaking tanks, including highly radioactive material, has contaminated the groundwater. It has formed a plume that in time, will flow to the Columbia River. We cannot and will not allow this to happen."

Read the full statement at <http://www.hanfordnews.com/opinions/columns/story/7703926p-7614972c.html>.

We need commitment and continuity from our national government. The Washington State Department of Ecology is concerned about the fiscal-year 2007 and 2008 budget proposal for funding Hanford cleanup. We are not convinced DOE has aggressively pursued or requested adequate funding to meet its long-term schedule and commitments for cleanup at Hanford.

Offsite Waste Shipments to Hanford

Contact: Ron Skinnarland

In January 2006, we settled our lawsuit with USDOE over the adequacy of USDOE's solid waste Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As part of that settlement, offsite wastes (with minor exceptions) will not come to Hanford until a final record of decision on a new EIS, due some time in 2009. This new EIS will re-do the groundwater parts of the flawed solid waste EIS. After this EIS, we will only allow waste at Hanford if it is legal and if it is safe.

Read the settlement agreement at <http://www.hanford.gov/orp>, click on Public Information, then Environmental Impact Statement.

If you need this publication in an alternate format, please call the Nuclear Waste Program at 509-372-7950. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.